THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MODEL FOR A MULTICULTURAL WORSHIP COMMUNITY AT WORD AND WORSHIP CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Michael T. Neil

M.A., Northern Theological Seminary, 2003
M.Div., eq. Northern Theological Seminary, 2007

Mentor
Dr. Ricky A. Woods, D.Min.
Dr. Terry Thomas, D.Min.

A FINAL DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO
THE DOCTORAL STUDIES COMMITTEE
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DAYTON, OHIO
May, 2010

Copyright© 2010 by Michael T. Neil
All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....v

DEDICATION.....vii

EPIGRAPH.....viii

INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER

1. MINISTRY FOCUS.....5
2. THE STATE OF THE ART OF THE MINISTRY FOCUS.....17
3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....74
4. METHODOLOGY.....146
5. FIELD EXPERIENCE.....160
6. REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION.....187

APPENDIX

A. COURSE OUTLINE.....199

B. PRE/POST-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE.....204

C. PRE-EVALUATION AND POST-EVALUATION RESULTS.....209

D. CHALLENGES TO MULTICULTURAL WORSHIP.....278

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....281

ABSTRACT

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF A MODEL FOR

A MULTICULTURAL WORSHIP COMMUNITY AT

WORD AND WORSHIP CHRISTIAN CHURCH

by

Michael T Neil

United Theological Seminary

Mentors

Dr. Ricky Woods, D.Min.

Dr. Terry Thomas, D.Min.

Many churches have failed to keep pace with the increasing multiculturalism occurring both in their communities and within their walls. This phenomenological study seeks to better understand the preaching and leadership at Word and Worship Christian Church in Aurora Illinois, where the researcher is pastor, with special attention to their impact on multicultural worship. With ten participants from the church, the researcher sought to identify essential characteristics in developing a model for establishing and maintaining a multicultural church through preaching and leadership, with direct implications for worship design. This model yielded the desired result of sustaining a multicultural worship community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher acknowledges the support of his family through their patience throughout this program of study. Without their understanding and acceptance of the sacrifice we would all have to make, this paper would not have been possible.

Likewise, the members of Word and Worship Christian Church have been both patient and encouraging. To the context associates who volunteered their time and energies to participate in the project, the researcher offers his gratitude. A special thanks to Amparo Urzua, who, after learning how much it was costing the researcher to print and ship the fifteen or more copies of this document required from first draft to final copy, took it upon herself to do all of the printing, binding, and shipping of this more than three hundred page document at her own expense.

There were several persons who offered assistance above and beyond expectation. My wife Barbetta Neil, who for three years tolerated my endless research and writing, helped format the entire bibliography and acted as an expert resource in the area of worship and spirituality. Cathy Smith-Harris volunteered to act as a resource in the area of counseling and psychology. Shar'on Cobb-Tartt was a resource in the areas of church leadership, ministry, and spiritual formation. To these, the researcher offers his profound gratitude.

The mentors for the Preaching and Leadership group, Drs. Ricky Woods and Terry Thomas spent time with this researcher in their church offices and in their homes beyond the contact time with the peer group.

The teaching faculty of United Theological Seminary were helpful beyond expectation or duty. Dr. Richard Eslinger, Dr. Thomas Dozeman, Dr. Emma Justes, and Dr. Andrew Sung-Park, who was on sabbatical when he agreed to speak with this researcher, all took time out of their active schedules to sit and meet with this researcher simple because he asked. Their insights and recommendations proved invaluable to this project, and the researcher is most grateful.

Finally, the two readers for the project who read this document from cover to cover, Dr. Damon Jones and Shar'on Cobb-Tartt, offered feedback, corrections, and questions that helped the researcher gather and write his thoughts with ever increasing clarity. Dr. Jones challenged the organization, focus, and structure of the document, while Shar'on Cobb-Tartt challenged the practicality of each claim and objective—forcing the researcher to consider and clarify how all the pieces would actually work in the local context and finally transfer to other contexts.

To my sons, Miles, Matthew, Michael, and Marcel Neil, all of whom had to make the greatest sacrifice—that of their father's time and energy during this program, I offer both my undying love and gratitude.

DEDICATION

The author dedicates this paper to the entire Neil family that lived in generations past. This dedication is extended to the researcher's departed uncles, Bus and Bill Neil, the brothers of the researcher's father and to the researcher's aunts, Doris Neil-Osborne and Margaret Neil-Stapleton. Also to Hiawatha Watts, the only sibling of the researcher's mother and eldest living member of her tribe. Most especially the researcher dedicates this project to his father who was an exemplary model of strength tempered with love and patience, and who always encouraged the researcher to place education at the top of his priority list, and to the researcher's mother who demonstrated how to survive and thrive against all odds, and convinced the researcher that he could accomplish anything he set his mind to. To these parents, the two people who worked the hardest, prayed the longest, loved the deepest, and sacrificed the most—the researcher has no words to express his immeasurable and undying gratitude. May you rest in peace George Edward Neil and Rosetta (Watts) Neil. Until I find my rest with you on the other side.

It is my desire to live my life in a way that glorifies God by making both the character and activities of God easier for others to see. To love those whom God brings across my path in a way that impacts their live in significant and lasting ways. And to teach the Word of God in such a way that it challenges believers and unbelievers alike to reevaluate their assumptions about God, and their relationship with Him. If together, with those whom God brings into my circle of life, we might grow closer to our Creator and more like Christ, then this life will be so full that I will cease to view death as the end of life, but will come to see it as the beginning of life eternal. A life not just with my Lord's spirit present, but in the presence of my Lord—a life to be longed for. Come Holy Spirit!

Michael T. Neil